

Week Ending Friday, April 7, 2000

Proclamation 7285—National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2000

March 31, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Children are our link to the future and our hope for a better tomorrow. Within a few short years, we will look to today's children for the vision, strength, creativity, and leadership to guide our Nation through the challenges of this new century. If they are to grow into healthy, happy adults and responsible citizens, we must provide our children with the love, nurturing, and protection they need and deserve.

However, many of America's children are not safe, even in their own homes. The statistics are staggering. Every year, there are nearly one million reported incidents of child abuse; and even more disturbing, more than 2,000 of these incidents result in the child's death. Whether suffering neglect, harsh physical punishment, sexual abuse, or psychological trauma, the children who survive will carry the scars of their abuse for the rest of their lives.

We now know that there are a variety of risk factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect—including parental substance abuse, lack of parenting skills and knowledge, domestic violence, or extreme stress—and there are practical measures and programs we can use to mitigate such factors. Social service providers can offer substance abuse programs for adults with children; schools can offer educational programs to teach parenting skills to teen mothers or instruct children on how to protect themselves from sexual predators; faith organizations can offer respite care for parents of children with special needs; and employers can introduce family-friendly policies, from child care to

parental leave to flexible work schedules, to reduce the stress on working families.

Keeping children safe is a community responsibility, and prevention must be a community task. Every segment of society must be involved, including health and law enforcement professionals, schools, businesses, the media, government agencies, community and faith organizations, and especially parents themselves. Teachers and physicians need to recognize the symptoms of child abuse; parents need to ask for help in overcoming addictions or controlling violent behavior; communities must be willing to fund programs and services to protect children from abuse; and the media needs to raise public awareness of the availability of those programs and services.

My Administration is committed to doing its part to ensure the health and well-being of all our Nation's children. We have worked to increase funding at the State level for child protection programs and family preservation services. Working with the Congress, we have enacted the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and the Adoption and Safe Families Act, and we have established the Safe and Stable Families Program. Just a few weeks ago, I signed into law the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act, which gives State and local officials greater flexibility in using Department of Justice grant programs to prevent child abuse and neglect. This new legislation will increase funding to enforce child abuse and neglect laws, to enhance the investigation of child abuse and neglect crimes, and to promote programs to prevent such abuse and neglect. Through these and other measures, we continue our efforts to create a society where every child is cherished and no child bears the lasting scars of abuse or neglect.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United

States, do hereby proclaim April 2000 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by demonstrating our gratitude to those who work to keep our children safe, and by taking action in our own communities to make them healthy places where children can grow and thrive.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on House Inaction on Extending the Energy Policy and Conservation Act

March 31, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

While the U.S. economy is the strongest it has ever been and inflation and unemployment remain at historically low levels, high oil prices have caused concern for many Americans. As a short-term measure, my Administration urged oil-producing nations to take steps to narrow the gap between worldwide production and consumption of crude oil in order to preserve sustained worldwide economic growth. Our focused diplomatic efforts helped produce tangible commitments by oil-producing nations to increase production to more appropriate levels that reflect current demand in the global economy.

While my Administration has worked hard to increase the supply of oil on the market, the House has failed to take one of the most critical steps necessary to maintain America's energy security—an extension of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), which includes authority to operate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), authority that expires today. The option to use the SPR is

an essential line of defense against an interruption in oil supplies. Although the Senate passed a four-year straight reauthorization of EPCA, the House has failed to act. It is critical that the House reauthorize EPCA immediately to ensure that the United States maintains its ability to use all available tools to respond to the needs of the U.S. economy.

In addition, Congress should address other energy measures. Congress should pass my comprehensive tax package, which includes new tax incentives for domestic oil producers to reduce U.S. reliance on oil imports, as well as other incentives to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy that Congress has failed to enact. Congress should also fully fund the more than \$1.4 billion that I have requested in my fiscal year 2001 Budget and 2000 Supplemental to promote energy security through the use of domestic energy technologies, including more efficient homes and buildings, a new generation of more efficient vehicles, renewable energy sources, and natural gas.

Finally, I have proposed the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast to reduce the likelihood of future heating oil shortages. Congress should authorize a reserve with an appropriate trigger to release heating oil to the market in the event of a supply shortage. I have directed the Department of Energy to begin the appropriate environmental reviews of the proposal to determine the correct approach to creating this reserve.

These critical steps will strengthen the sound, comprehensive energy strategy that has helped sustain the longest economic expansion in American history. They will enhance America's energy security, create jobs, protect the environment, and produce long-term savings for consumers. Congress should waste no more time in enacting these measures into law.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.